

Pan Japan



The Influence of America

ON THE

Reconstruction of Japan

BY

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OF

TOKYO, JAPAN

*A MESSAGE TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, AT THE
CLOSE OF THE WORLD WAR*

As all nations have come to face a new age, so Japan is also undergoing a change by leaps and bounds from national brotherhood to international brotherhood. The present condition of Japan is very similar to that of 50 years ago, when the Sunrise Kingdom came out from the feudal age to enter the modern world. Let us go into the details a little more fully

The birth of modern Imperial Japan and its sudden growth are among the remarkable events in the recent history of the world. It is not a creation of yesterday; it had more than a century been forming in the heart of feudal Japan, waiting for the day of its birth. Through the mere threat of bombardment, Commodore Perry gave birth to

modern Imperial Japan. No foreigner knew at that time that feudal Japan was already pregnant with it. Even many intelligent Japanese were not conscious of it. There were two opposite forces struggling one against another in its formation. One was a monarchical conservative force that demanded the restoration of the Imperial family to the rulership of Japan and the expulsion of foreigners; the other force was a very progressive one, but insignificant in appearance at that time. It desired the open door, the equality of men and the coming out of the Emperor from his divine concealment to appear before his people as one of them. It emphasized the modernization of Japan. The feudalism of several centuries, the common enemy of both the imperialistic and progressive parties was once for all entirely destroyed, and as the result of the struggle of these opposite forces, modern Imperial Japan was created.

This remarkable event is rather to be called a revolution than a restoration. The motto, "Loyalty and Expulsion of Foreigners," was changed into "Loyalty and the Open Door." The phrase, "Civilization and Enlightenment," became more popular than "the restoration of the Imperial rule."

The universal compulsory educational system was adopted from America. Boys and girls of all classes began to be educated in the same public schools in order to fit them to become citizens of modern Imperial Japan. The fatherhood of the Emperor and the brotherhood of all our countrymen became the national slogan.

Facing toward America, modern Japan was eager for new ideals and pressed forward to appropriate them, sacrificing all things for their attainment. But the world was not yet prepared to receive Japan into the fraternity of free nations. On the contrary, by opening the door Japan entered the society of armed nations which were then rivalling one another for the seizure of territories. In order to be an honorable member of the society of armed nations, Japan had to reconstruct her army organization and build up a strong navy. Universal conscription was the consequence. By so doing, Japan hardly escaped from the aggression of

the great powers. The result was the Germanization rather than the Americanization of Japan.

Some Europeans who have a good opinion of themselves as experts say: "The desire of Japan to annex Korea and rule China had been inherited from the time of Hideyoshi," who lived three hundred years ago. Nothing is more erroneous than that. Japan had always been on the defensive. Hideyoshi's aggression on Korea was an exceptional outburst. Ieyasu and his successors were so strong on the defensive that they finally closed the doors of Japan and even forbade their countrymen to go abroad. Japanese ships were then crossing the Pacific. If her desire had been aggressive, Japan could have fought with the Spaniards for the possession of the Philippines, and with the Dutch for Java. If she had been adventurous, Japan might have obtained Australia. Because she put too much emphasis on the defensive, she lost forever the opportunity of expansion.

The adoption of universal conscription not only saved Japan from foreign invasion, but unexpectedly made way for the growth of democracy. The sons of the common people, even of the outcast class, were disciplined to fight. In the Civil War of 1877, ten years after the revolution, they astonished the world by defeating the strong army of Samurai, the military aristocrats then commanded by General Saigo, the greatest hero of that time. Not by the Imperial decree, but by their deeds, the common people actualized the proclamation of the equality of men.

After this Civil War, the Samurai class began to give their daughters and sons in marriage to the sons and daughters of the common people and vice versa. The sons of the common people together with those of Samurai fought against China and Russia and experienced great victories. It was a great gain for democracy in Japan, because by these magnificent victories national brotherhood was strengthened. No wonder the great organization of the army and navy has become supreme in Japan. It is a natural outcome of external and internal circumstances.

Is national brotherhood with militarism the ultimate aim

of the development of nations, or is there a higher ideal and broader interest than nationalism? Here is the crux of the question on which Japan is now divided.

If nationalism be the ultimate end of man's social and political development, Japan's present state is the most desirable one. No one has the right to criticise her in regard to this. Such criticism as the loud noise raised about the Shantung question may be considered as an outburst of jealousy and fear. It may be considered as nothing more than the conflict of self-interest against self-interest, capitalism against capitalism, and nationalism against nationalism, which will finally lead nations to war. Do we desire nationalism to become rampant in the world? Heaven forbid!

Had not America been endeavoring to promote the international welfare of humanity? Was not the selfish ambition of German imperialism beaten down by the higher ideal of humanity and the international interest of the Allies? If we have faith in reason, and in the progress of humanity, and above all in God, we cannot but hope in the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth. Is not international brotherhood nearer to the Kingdom of God than national brotherhood? No nation can enter God's kingdom unless it be born anew and become international and supernational.

Though the League of Nations framed by the Peace Conference at Paris be imperfect, yet it does not prove that the international brotherhood of nations is utopian and a delusion. Nothing less than such a gigantic and sublime scheme as the League of Nations can satisfy the requirement of the Christian consciousness. Whether it be perfect or imperfect, it must be viewed as the beginning of a new age. Is Japan, which is now in the height of nationalism and militarism, morally and spiritually prepared to enter it?

The Anglo-American religious influence exerted by missionaries and through religious literature has been tremendous. The results have not been so brilliant as expected, but deep down in the soul of Japan, it has given a new ideal, a new sentiment, a new aspiration, a new energy, a

new consciousness, a new spirit that cries after God, the Father of all—"Abba Father!" This cry is the strongest and noblest of all cries Japan has ever experienced. It arouses in the depth of the soul the consciousness of divine sonship, of divine kinship with Christ who reigns over all and in all, the consciousness of the new man created after Him in righteousness and holiness of truth, who has come not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.

This new man contradicts his environment, political, social and individual. He is struggling and travailing in pain to redeem Japan from her old conditions, and to break the hard shell of nationalism and militarism.

Protestant Christians number about one hundred and fifty thousand. This number is, when compared with the large population of fifty-six million, very small; little more than one-fourth of one per cent. But their influence is considerable. The higher the grade of intelligence, the greater is their number. Three years ago there were three hundred Christians among five thousand students in Tokyo Imperial University, and among one hundred professors of the same institution there were sixteen followers of Christ.

The leader of the democratic movement among young men is Dr. Yoshino, the professor of politics in Tokyo Imperial University, an enthusiastic member of my church. He is the most popular writer and lecturer in Japan. The leader of the universal suffrage movement is Dr. Amai, a congressman. He is also a member of my church. The leader of the labor movement is Mr. Suzuki, who was for a long time a member of my church and now belongs to the Unitarian Association.

Though Christians are comparatively few, yet their friends are very numerous. Those who have imbibed Christian ideals are innumerable. Thus a new, democratic international Japan is already formed within the Imperial military nation. How shall it emerge and be set free?

Some imagine that the fear of America will bring about the regeneration of Japan. No, that is a very erroneous

view. It is out of date. America did this 60 years ago. It must not be repeated. Japan has ever been grateful to Commodore Perry for his decisive action as is manifested by setting up his monument at Uraga. But modern Japan is very different from feudal Japan.

Suppose America should threaten Japan by her army and navy, Japan would prepare for it. Suppose America should stir up national feeling against Japan, Japan will stir up her national feeling against America. If Americans should send some propaganda to China against Japan, the Japanese would do more in China against America. If some Chinese desire to be helped by America against Japan, there are not a few Chinese who would be helped by the Japanese against America. Army against army, navy against navy, jingoism against jingoism, nationalism against nationalism contribute nothing for the conversion of Japan and the welfare of Asia. They only harden the hard shell of nationalism and delude the inexperienced Asiatics.

I am sorry to say that some of your representative statesmen have been driving Japan more and more to Prussianism. Are not some Americans becoming more and more nationalistic and reactionary? I believe that tendency is only in appearance. But it has, I frankly tell you, been casting a dark shadow upon the mind of the Japanese. The American influence that Japan will not be able to resist must come from another and higher source.

The league of nations for the welfare not only of each nation, but of the whole of humanity, requires broader sentiment, nobler aspiration, stronger faith in reason, more intense love for truth and the clearer consciousness of the indwelling spirit of God in humanity than nationalism and patriotism.

If this great scheme of world brotherhood be presented to the mind of the Japanese by the unconquerable determination of the American people, Japan cannot fail to accept the invitation, because it appeals to the better nature of the Japanese and clarifies the ideal of Christianity already hovering in their mind. This moral influence accelerates the

process of Japan's conversion from national brotherhood to international brotherhood. You know how to deal with an individual to convert him to Christianity. In the same spirit the conversion of the nation must be brought about.

The Christian internationalism revealed in Christ and to be realized in the League of Nations, is a tremendous blow to the militarism of any nation, and of course to the militarism of Japan. The present form of militarism cannot stand because of its robbery and oppression. It has a strong reason for its existence when it stands on the defensive side. In the name of national defense, it grows and increases in strength. Therefore, if we take away the reason for its existence, it will no longer maintain its power, provided that the sentiment of the people is influenced by a higher ideal.

My American friends, as you once lead out Japan from the old feudal system and its clan brotherhood to national brotherhood, will you not now encourage Japan to advance from imperialism and its national brotherhood to international democracy and universal brotherhood? I assure you, Japan will respond to your call for higher ideals and nobler life. My earnest prayer is that Great Britain and the United States will more closely be united for the great and noble cause of humanity. The united determination of these two gigantic nations can make the Christian ideal a reality.

Is not the League of Nations the application of the Christian democratic principle to international politics? Is it not more satisfactory to Christian sentiment than the society of armed nations? Is not Christianity in very fact the religion of the League of Nations? Is it not indeed the creative power of the League? As long as Christianity is dominated by nationalism, it is an undeveloped religion, and unable to displace the national religions of Japan and China. The defect of Protestantism is that it is too nationalistic. If it would unite all nations under its influence into a fraternal federation, and come to Japan as the driving force of the League of Nations, Japan would give up her religion of ancestor worship and embrace Christianity. Because she must acknowledge one universal Father, and

become a part of the universal brotherhood of mankind. Then Japan will be your sister nation in body and soul. There will no more be the dread of war between America and Japan.

America, by taking the responsibility of leadership in the League of Nations, could, I assure you, be the means of producing a new democratic, international Japan that would fulfill the work done by your predecessors, statesmen, missionaries and educators for the last sixty years. May God impress upon America her responsibility in the redemption of the East!



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